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ABSTRACT

Recent federal legislative and executive actions on non-discriminatory processes in employment and promotion will have implications in the future for the hiring, certification, and admission of individuals into the teaching profession. Procedures for entry into teaching are in need of revision to assure that all applicants are treated in an unbiased, reliable fashion. The use of multiple measures to ascertain teacher/teacher candidate proficiency is urged to meet any future legal requirements, as well as the present moral obligation of non-discriminatory treatment. (MJB)

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WHO ENTERS THE PROFESSION --
HOW DO WE DECIDE?

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Who Enters The Profession -- How Do We Decide?

Several recent actions of the courts and of the executive branch of government have a direct impact on the processes and procedures for employment, certification or admission to a profession. The courts and agencies of the executive branch have established guidelines and directed the application of those guidelines in the use of tests and other measures for deciding who is and who is not to be hired, certified, or admitted to a profession. While many of the court decisions are based on cases of discrimination or faulty screening and selection procedures in fields other than teaching, they are directly applicable to selection, certification, and hiring decisions in the field of teaching. The application of those guidelines to selection, certification, and hiring of teachers will have an impact upon the measures that are used to obtain information on which to base decisions about the various steps of admission to the field of teaching for an individual.

Legal and Administrative Pressures

There are a number of laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination. The fourteenth amendment of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race. In addition, Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifically prohibits discrimination in employment. In 1972, the provisions of this 1964 legislation were extended to state and local governments, including school

districts. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has developed guidelines for the implementation of Title VII.

However, with the extension of Title VII to governmental agencies at all levels, a number of federal agencies involved in the enforcement of fair employment practices have formed the Equal Employment Opportunity Co-ordinating Council, which has developed new guidelines for fair employment, the Federal Executive Agency Guidelines. While somewhat more flexible than the older EEOC guidelines, the Federal Executive Agency Guidelines have been extended to apply to licensing and certification boards in complying with equal employment opportunity requirements of federal law. In his recent analyses of fair employment regulations, Rebell has indicated that "licensing authorities should assume that they will be held accountable for compliance with these laws."¹

While employment laws and regulations have thus been extended to licensing situations, it seems more accurate to view the concern with licensing as a basic concern for access or entry to a profession. Any regulation which can appropriately be applied to issues of licensing can be extended logically to the broader issues of entry to the profession of teaching. If discriminatory employment practices and licensing procedures are illegal, the same can be anticipated to be true of other practices and procedures related to admission to a profession in which people earn their livelihood.

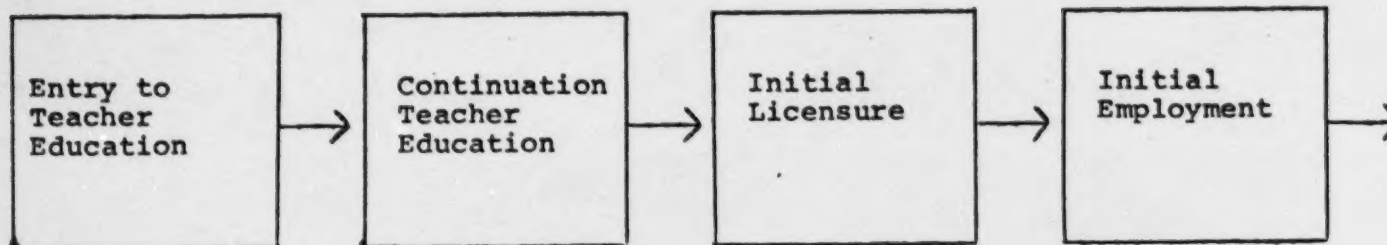
At the same time that it seems evident that legal requirements can be extended to cover the various aspects of admission to a profession, it also seems evident that the weight of moral judgments should be felt as strongly as the potential threat of legal pressures. We as educators should not wait until the legal regulations are extended to all aspects of admission to the profession before we move to review and revise the admission procedures to address entry opportunity concerns. This discussion is thus based on a moral as well as a legal concern for the fairness and appropriateness of the procedures used to admit persons into the profession of teaching.

Returning to a consideration of guidelines relating to equal employment, both sets of guidelines (EEOC and Federal Executive Agency) require that any test used as part of a selection procedure be shown to be related to the work to be performed. The EEOC guidelines stress predictive validity, with a demonstration that those who do better on a test are more successful on a job. In instances where the demonstration of predictive validity is not presently feasible, the guidelines allow the demonstration of a less strenuous relationship, that of content validity. The items on any test must be shown to be related, on their face, to the tasks to be performed on the job. However, the demonstration of content validity under EEOC guidelines requires the completion of an extensive job analysis. The newer Federal Executive Agency Guidelines accept "the pooled judgments of persons having knowledge of the job" as adequate for a job analysis.

Entry Into the Profession

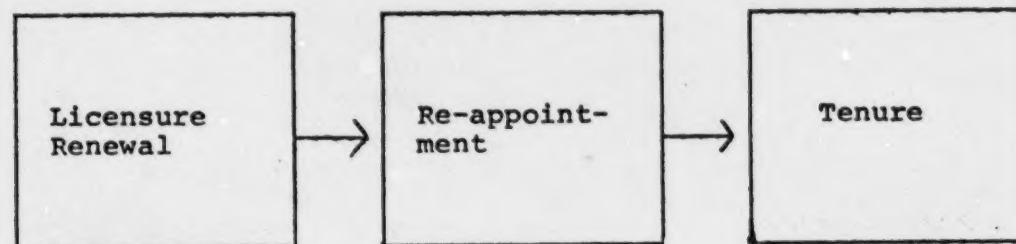
Regardless of whichever guidelines are finally determined through the courts to be appropriate for entry into teaching, it seems evident that procedures for entry into teaching are in need of revision based on some type of job analysis. Assume for purposes of this discussion that the profession of teaching is defined as the staffing of a public school classroom. Entry into the profession, then, occurs at several points; it is not a one-time event but a series of events, at any one of which an individual can be excluded from teaching in the public schools. Let us consider only those events which are directly related to entry into the teaching profession. The several steps are presented visually in figure I. The first of these is selection into a program of teacher education. When there is a shortage of teachers this may not be a major, or even a minor, hurdle. However, as programs in teacher education are curtailed in light of the numbers of teachers unable to find employment,² the process of selection for admission to a program of teacher education is likely to become more restrictive. More people will be denied entry into the profession at this initial step.

A second stage of admission to the profession includes all those times during a program of teacher education when individual may be refused the right to continue. The number and frequency of these times, as well as the criteria employed, will vary from program to program and state to state. Under present California regulations the last of these hurdles is the review of a teacher



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* A number of possible steps, such as advanced academic programs, employment in another district, employment in another job category, advanced credentials

FIGURE I

education student prior to recommendation for a credential. While each teacher education institution utilizes its own criteria, the criteria are based on the stated objectives of the teacher education program of that institution.

The next selection event is the credential process. In most instances where the granting of a credential is based on completion of an approved program of teacher education, the granting of the credential is a formality which involves little screening or selection. However, there are still some factors which may result in the refusal of a credential and thus the candidate would be denied entry into teaching. In California it is possible for a credential to be denied although a person successfully completes an approved program of teacher education, e.g. on the basis of health concerns or past criminal record, such as conviction for certain specified felonies.

Employment is the next, but not the last, major event in the process of entry to the teaching profession. It is also the event at which equal employment opportunity concerns are first identified. Further events which the individual must successfully negotiate include the hurdles of re-appointment, tenure, accountability evaluation systems, and further credential requirements which may result in denial of full entry into the profession. For example, those individuals who are unable to meet any further credential requirements, such as a fifth year of education or some number of years of classroom teaching experience, are effectively denied full entry into the profession of teaching.

Selection Measures

In all of these selection events a number of measures are used to determine whether an individual should be admitted or excluded. Without enumerating all of the possible measures, they typically include grade-point-averages, examination scores (written tests), performance scores, and ratings by supervisors (master teachers, supervisors of student teaching, principals). The specific measures vary, depending upon the selection event (admission into a teacher education program or employment within a district) and the person(s) or agency(s) responsible for selection.

There are a number of problems with selection measures. First, a concern with any measure must be the reliability of that measure. Ratings by supervisors are particularly susceptible to problems of reliability since they are apt to be global measures subject to a halo effect -- a general liking or a successful performance in one area is generalized to success in all areas. Interviews also suffer from this problem. A second problem of ratings and interviews is a potential lack of consistency across evaluators. Since many aspects of ratings and interviews are based on individual judgment, the results may vary depending upon the persons doing the interviewing or rating. These two types of problems can be classified as problems of reliability of the measurement procedure and of the person applying the procedure. Other areas where reliability must also be a concern include performance measures and written tests.

A second broad concern is the validity of any measure, i.e., the relationship of the measure to the reality of performance on the job, or its veridicality. Examples of this problem include tests of knowledge of subject matter which have not clearly been related to job performance of teachers and performance tests which have not been conclusively related to success in teaching in public school classrooms. Performance tests are usually of short duration, a lesson or a series of lessons, and the relationship between such tests and teaching throughout a school year is not clear. Contradictory evidence which amplifies this problem includes the achievement of students in short units is related to the achievement of students during a school year³ and other research evidence which indicates that the achievement of the students of a given teacher will fluctuate from year to year.⁴ In other words, while samples from within a year may predict that year, they do not predict between years, e.g., a teacher's students may have a high mean gain one year while the next year students of the same teacher may have an average or low mean gain on the same achievement test.

Another major area of concern is that any one of the existing measures, performance and written tests, ratings, or observations, covers only one portion of the tasks which teachers are expected to perform. Written tests usually cover subject matter and pedagogical knowledge. Performance tests usually focus on instructional actions of teachers. Ratings are apt to cover the broadest range of teaching tasks particularly when a number of

persons (principal, students) complete ratings. Observations typically focus on instructional tasks and, while they can be used to collect information about other teaching responsibilities in addition to instruction, they are limited to use with actions and observable behaviors.

A Possible Solution -- Multiple Measures

One complex approach may help to address both problems of measurement and problems of relevance to the profession of teaching. Again, a visual presentation is presented in figure 2.

Since each measurement procedure has one or more potential problem and is limited by its nature to use in assessing only some aspects of teaching responsibilities, it seems most appropriate to consider using multiple measures in any system of assessment and selection into the teaching profession. Each procedure can then be used in the most appropriate way to measure those aspects of teaching for which it is most suited. In some instances, two or more procedures might be used to measure the same general area of teaching responsibility. Thus, both performance tests and ratings of student teaching by master teachers might be used to measure instructional aspects of teaching.

It may be possible to use the same measures at several of the admission points, with different levels of achievement required at each point. For example, performance tests might be used to measure acquisition of teaching skills at various points within a teacher education program, at the completion of such a program,

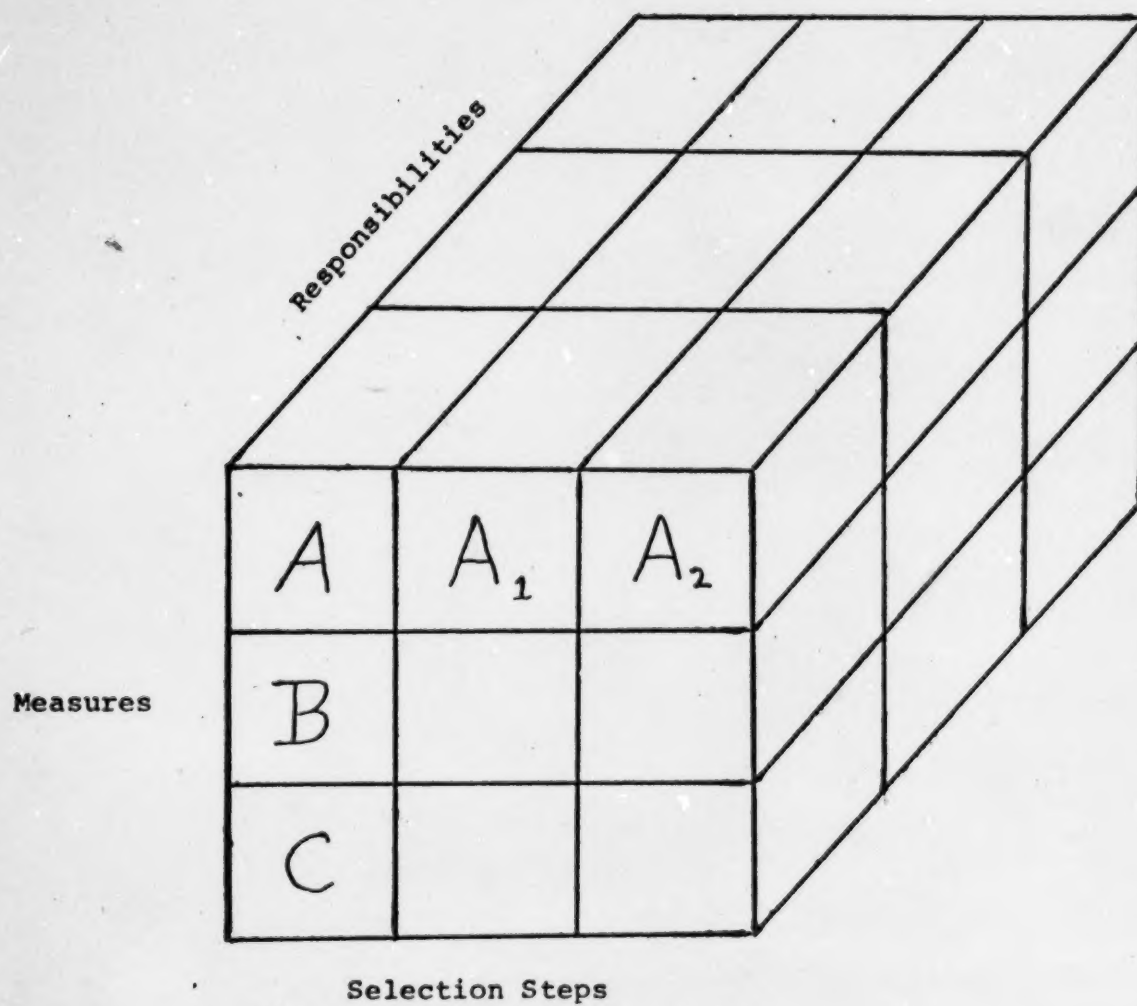


FIGURE 2

and when hiring and/or retention decisions are being made. Tests of pedagogical knowledge might be used as one of the credentialing criteria and the same tests might be used with employed teachers to assess needs for staff development.

Another important concern is the multiple aspects of the job of teaching. We have assigned many responsibilities to the public schools, including economic (keeping older students out of the labor market), health (school lunch programs and eye examinations as two examples), social (good sportsmanship and competition), affective (positive self concept), and academic. As the major employees of the agency charged with all of these responsibilities, teachers likewise must perform in many areas.

Any assessment of the various aspects of the tasks assigned to teachers, either by an extensive job analysis or by a panel of experts, would identify a number of major areas in which teachers are expected to function. The most obvious area is that of instruction. A teacher is responsible for instructing some number of students in some content area(s). Another area of responsibility, particularly in elementary schools, is the supervision of other adults such as teacher aides and parent volunteers. Parent education is also a task assigned to some teachers, particularly in categorically funded programs. Curriculum, both selection and development, is another area among the many tasks for which teachers are responsible. While the development of curriculum is an important aspect of teaching in some programs, such as ESEA Title VII bilingual programs, many teachers are also involved in

selection of instructional materials. Decisions about what materials to use with which students are made by all teachers. Many new programs involve teachers in planning activities far broader in scope than planning for the instruction of some number of students. Examples include planning for categorically funded programs and for staff development at the school site. A number of areas of professional responsibility go beyond the classroom and the school, e.g., participation in professional organizations and maintenance of professional skills.

Perhaps it is time to define more clearly the many roles that teachers are expected to fulfill. While there are variations across school districts and even states in the emphasis placed upon the various roles, there is probably enough similarity to allow for a pooling of resources in completing such a review and definition. Lists and catalogues of teacher competencies might serve as a resource. District-level job descriptions may also provide one means of checking the types of tasks which teachers are expected to perform. Collective bargaining out of necessity may develop such lists.

We must include teachers in this attempt to identify broad areas of teacher responsibility, but there are a number of other groups which have a perspective on the roles of teachers. A list of such groups might include school administrators, parents, teacher aides, other support personnel (custodians, nurses), and teacher educators. These people must also be involved in a review of the roles and responsibilities of teachers.

While we cannot anticipate total consensus about the relative weight to be assigned to the various roles, or the specific tasks within each role, we can expect general agreement about the major areas in which teachers are expected to function. This should provide a basis from which individual agencies and organizations can establish criteria for admission into the teaching profession. States can establish standards for certification based on the statements of roles. Districts can establish standards for hiring and retaining classroom teachers and the criteria for implementing those standards. Teacher educators can establish standards and criteria for admission into, retention in, and completion of programs of teacher education.

Multiple measures will be necessary to assess the knowledge and skills of individuals in these several areas of teacher responsibility at the several points of entry into the profession. Written tests may be most appropriate to determine knowledge related to one or more of the roles. Performance tests may be most appropriate to assess skills in some of the several roles. Observation and/or rating systems may be the more effective means for determining proficiency or adequacy of individuals in still other areas.

Such a system will undoubtedly have considerably more content validity than present procedures, even though it still may not be feasible to establish predictive validity for a system of multiple measures of the accomplishments of individuals in a number of areas or roles. It is realistic to anticipate than an adequate

process for selection into a profession as complex as teaching will likewise be complex. This is not to argue for a complex system solely for the sake of complexity but rather to argue that it is unrealistic to expect that a simple system will serve to select individuals for entry into a complex and demanding profession. Such a system of multiple measures for multiple areas of professional responsibility is not only more apt to meet any legal scrutiny by the courts or federal agencies enforcing equal employment opportunity guidelines, but also more apt to provide a fair opportunity for each person to be considered in light of his or her individual strengths and weaknesses. Such a system should increase everyone's confidence that we are admitting into the profession of teaching those individuals who are most apt to fulfill the many roles associated with the label of teacher in today's public schools.

FOOTNOTES

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